Comments to PA EPA on Injection Wells in Plum Borough, PA, on June 28, 2022
Underground Injection Control (UIC)
Program Notice of Draft Permit PENNECO Environmental solutions, PAS2D702BALL

In 2018 citizens in Plum Borough spoke out against the first proposed fracking waste injection well in their suburb of Pittsburgh. We are still concerned that the toxic waste could escape into the Allegheny River and contaminate downstream public drinking water systems, including that of the Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority (PWSA). PWSA provides drinking water to hundreds of thousands of people. A 2016 Geological Survey found that oil and gas waste from an injection well in West Virginia had contaminated a nearby creek. In Texas, cracks in the casing of an injection well allowed contamination of an aquifer through which it ran.

The Plum well that was permitted to receive fracking waste in 2020 is drilled through an old coal mine. There are 16 abandoned gas wells within a half-mile of this well and 66 gas wells within one mile. Terry Engelder, Emeritus Professor of Geosciences at Penn State said that the presence of these old wells can facilitate the migration of injected wastewater. [alleghenyfront.org/groups-oppose-pittsburgh-area-fracking-waste-injection-well/] This water can migrate thousands of feet laterally.

Residents are complaining about the noise and air pollution produced by trucks bringing fracking waste water to the site of the injection well permitted in 2020. The formerly quiet neighborhood now experiences heavy truck traffic 24/7. Off loading fluid increases the odor of toxic organic compounds. Occupational exposure to benzene significantly increases the risk of leukemia. [ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1568103/] The presence of benzene increases the risk of leukemia by 30% in people living within 3 miles of the site of pollution. [Environ Health 2020; 19:53 PMID:32430062] After the first injection well started function, the well water of a neighbor changed in color and taste.

The Chief Operating Officer for Penneco, Ben Wallace, said that a second injection well is needed to increase capacity and operate more efficiently. [wesa.fm/health-science-tech/2022-03-10/environmentl-group-joins-plum] Where does this end? Penneco's need to dispose of fracking waste will increase until they stop fracking. Every injection well developed in Plum will increase the risk of downstream water pollution. It is easy to ignore this risk until disaster occurs. It may be easy to ignore the increased risk of leukemia in workers & residents, because years pass after exposure before this life threatening disease is recognized. But it is morally wrong to ignore the health risks that this industry imposes on Pennsylvanians.

I urge you to deny a permit for this injection well, Sedat #4A.

Sincerely,

Non-responsive based on revised scope.
Non-responsive based on revised scope.

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